

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 18-30 were presented for examination and are pending in this application. In a Final Office Action dated November 12, 2004, claims 1-16 and 17-30 were rejected.

Telephonic Interview

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of a telephone interview on April 7, 2005, during which agreement was reached concerning amendments to patentably distinguish the independent claims over the documents relied on by the Examiner. Applicants propose amending the claims in accordance with the discussion at the interview.

Applicants further propose amending claim 30 to correct the antecedent basis issue identified by the Examiner in the Office Action.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC § 112, Paragraph 1

These rejections are moot in light of applicants' proposed amendments. Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under § 112, first paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC § 112, Paragraph 2

In the 7th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 30 as not specifically pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter that Applicants regard as the invention. Applicants propose amending claim 30 to change "the" to "a" in claim 30. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this minor claim amendment because it corrects a minor antecedent basis issue pointed out by the Examiner.

Response to Rejection Under 35 USC 103(a)

In the 10th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-5, 9, 16, 18-21, and 25-29 under 35 USC § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Walker et al., U.S. Patent 5,862,223 ("Walker '223") in view of Salas et al, U.S. Patent 6,233,600 ("Salas"); in the 11th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 6-8 in further view of Rackson et al., U.S. Patent 6,415,270 (Rackson); in the 12th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 10-11 in further view of Glasser et al., U.S. Patent 5,956,715 (Glasser). In the 13th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 12-15 as being unpatentable over Walker in further view of Bi et al., U.S. Patent 6,311,178 (Bi); in the 14th paragraph of the Office Action claims 22-23 as being unpatentable over Walker '223 in further view of Bi, and in further view of Walker et al. 6,484,153 (Walker '153). In the 15th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 24 as being unpatentable over Walker '223 in further view of Salas and in further view of Murcho, Jr., U.S. Patent 6,578,014 (Murcho, Jr.). In the 16th paragraph of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claim 30 as being unpatentable over Walker '223 in further view of Bi and in further view of Salas. These rejections are moot in light of the claim amendments agreed on at the interview.

Independent Claims 1, 12, 16, 18-21 and their Dependent Claims

The amendments to each of independent claims 1, 12, 16, and 18-21 and their dependent claims were agreed to patentably distinguish the pending claims over the cited art. The pending claims should be allowed for at least this reason.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-16 and 18-30, as presented herein, are patentably distinguishable over the cited reference (including references cited, but not applied). Therefore, Applicants request entry of the amendments and reconsideration and allowance of these claims.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
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